

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Plaintiff,

v.

RICKY S. WAHCHUMWAH (1) and
VICTORIA M. JIM (2),
Defendants.

NO. CR-09-2035-EFS-1
CR-09-2035-EFS-2

**PRELIMINARY ORDER OF
FORFEITURE**

On November 16 and December 17, 2010, a Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 32.2 forfeiture hearing occurred in the above-captioned matter. Timothy Ohms appeared on the U.S. Attorneys Office's (USAO) behalf. Defendants Ricky S. Wahchumwah and Victoria M. Jim were present, represented by Adam Moore and Thomas Zeilman respectively. After reviewing the submitted material and relevant authority and considering the trial and forfeiture hearing testimony,¹ evidence, and oral argument, the Court is fully informed and enters this preliminary forfeiture Order.

¹ Defendants testified and also called Raymond Colfax, Sandra Jim, Jim Wahchumwah, Jr., Donna Sohapp, Vikki Wahchumwah, and Tracy Hames. The USAO called U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Special Agent Robert Romero.

1 **A. Standard**

2 Pursuant to Rule 32.2,

3 [a]s soon as practical after a verdict. . . on any count in an
4 indictment or information regarding which criminal forfeiture
5 is sought, the court must determine what property is subject
6 to forfeiture under the applicable statute. If the government
seeks forfeiture of specific property, the court must determine
whether the government has established the requisite nexus
between the property and the offense. . . .

7 Fed. R. Crim. P. 32.2(b)(1)(A); see also 28 U.S.C. § 2461(c). Here, the
8 applicable statutes are the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA),
9 16 U.S.C. § 668b(b), and Lacey Act, 16 U.S.C. § 3374(a). The BGEPA
10 states:

11 All bald or golden eagles, or parts, nests, or eggs thereof,
12 taken, possessed, sold, purchased, bartered, offered for sale,
13 purchase, or barter, transported, exported, or imported
14 contrary to the provisions of this subchapter, or of any permit
15 or regulation issued hereunder, and all guns, traps, nets, and
16 other equipment, vessels, vehicles, aircraft, and other means
of transportation used to aid in the taking, possessing,
selling, purchasing, bartering, offering for sale, purchase,
or barter, transporting, exporting, or importing of any bird,
or part, nest, or egg thereof, in violation of this subchapter
or of any permit or regulation issued hereunder shall be
subject to forfeiture to the United States.

17 16 U.S.C. § 668b(b). The Lacey Act similarly provides:

18 (1) All fish or wildlife or plants imported, exported,
19 transported, sold, received, acquired, or purchased contrary
20 to the provisions of section 3372 of this title (other than
21 section 3372(b) of this title), or any regulation issued
22 pursuant thereto, shall be subject to forfeiture to the United
States notwithstanding any culpability requirements for civil
penalty assessment or criminal prosecution included in section
3373 of this title.

23 (2) All vessels, vehicles, aircraft, and other equipment
24 used to aid in the importing, exporting, transporting, selling,
25 receiving, acquiring, or purchasing of fish or wildlife or
26 plants in a criminal violation of this chapter for which a
felony conviction is obtained shall be subject to forfeiture
to the United States if (A) the owner of such vessel, vehicle,
aircraft, or equipment was at the time of the alleged illegal

act a consenting party or privy thereto or in the exercise of due care should have known that such vessel, vehicle, aircraft, or equipment would be used in a criminal violation of this chapter, and (B) the violation involved the sale or purchase of, the offer of sale or purchase of, or the intent to sell or purchase, fish or wildlife or plants.

16 U.S.C. § 3374(a).

B. Application

The parties agree that all forfeiture items (FIs) identified by the USAO in its Chart (ECF No. [318](#), attach. A) are forfeitable, except for the following: 4, 17, 22, 39, 45, 46, 53, 58, 60, 61, 65, 67, and 69. Also, since submitting its forfeiture chart, the USAO has withdrawn its forfeiture request for FIs 17 and 67. Accordingly, FI 17 shall be returned to Raymond Colfax, and FI 67 shall be returned to Defendants.

The Court enters its findings as to the contested FIs in the table below:

FI	Description	Court Findings
4	3 full sets of bald eagle tails (1 mature and 2 immature)	Not forfeited: must be returned to Defendants
22	37 golden eagle and 8 bald eagle detached feet sets	Forfeited in part: 27 golden eagle feet sets and 6 bald eagle sets Not forfeited in part: 10 golden eagle feet sets and 2 bald eagle feet sets
39	Golden eagle wing set (42 feathers from an immature golden eagle)	Not forfeited: must be returned to Defendants
45	Golden eagle wing set (40 feathers from mature golden eagle)	Not forfeited: must be returned to Defendants
46	Golden eagle wing set (35-40	Not forfeited: must be

	feathers from mature golden eagle)	returned to Defendants
53	37 wing feathers (golden and bald eagle wing feathers)	Forfeited in part: 26 wing feathers Not forfeited: remainder must be returned to Defendants
58	Briefcase containing plumes	Forfeited: fifty percent Not forfeited: fifty percent must be returned to Defendants
60	Blue-center bustle	Not forfeited: must be returned to Defendants
61	Plastic Tupperware-style box containing tail plumes	Not forfeited: one set bound with black and white tape and twenty plumes with white tape Forfeited: remainder
65	Tail feather sets and loose tail feathers	Not forfeited: 15 golden eagle sets and 5 bald eagle sets Forfeited: remainder
69	Orange-center bustle	Not forfeited: must be returned to Defendants

In summary, the Court directs forfeiture of FIs 1-3, 5-16, 18-21, 22 (twenty-seven golden eagle sets and six bald eagle sets), 23-38, 40-44, 47-52, 53 (twenty-six wing feathers), 54-57, 58 (fifty percent of plumes), 59, 61 (remainder as identified in table above), 62-64, 65 (remainder as identified in table above), 66, 68, and 70-78. See Fed. R. Crim. P. 32.2(b)(2)(A). The Court finds the USAO established the requisite nexus between these listed FI assets and Defendants' unlawful conduct. This Order serves as the preliminary forfeiture Order and it

1 is entered "sufficiently in advance of sentencing to allow the parties
2 to suggest revisions or modifications before the order becomes final"
3 under Rule 32.2(b)(4). *Id.* at 32.2(b)(2)(B).

4 **C. Conclusion**

5 Accordingly, **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:**

6 The U.S. Attorney General or its designee is authorized to seize FIs
7 1-3, 5-16, 18-21, 22 (twenty-seven golden eagle sets and six bald eagle
8 sets), 23-38, 40-44, 47-52, 53 (twenty-six wing feathers), 54-57, 58
9 (fifty percent of plumes), 59, 61 (remainder as identified in table
10 above), 62-64, 65 (remainder as identified in table above), 66, 68, 70-78
11 and to conduct any discovery proper in identifying, locating, or
12 disposing of the property subject to forfeiture, in accordance with Rule
13 32.2(b)(3). The non-forfeited FIs must be returned to Defendants, absent
14 FI 17, which shall be returned to Raymond Colfax.

15 Applicable proceedings to comply with statutes governing third party
16 rights, including giving notice of this Order, may occur. Notice will
17 be posted on the official government internet site (www.forfeiture.gov)
18 for at least 30 days. *Id.* at 32.2(b) (incorporating Suppl. R. for
19 Admiralty or Maritime Claims and Asset Forfeiture Actions
20 G(4)(a)(iv)(C)). To the extent practicable, direct written notice may
21 also be provided to any person who reasonably appears to be a potential
22 claimant with standing to contest the forfeiture in the ancillary
23 proceeding. *Id.* at 32.2(6)(A).

24 Any person, other than the above-named Defendants, asserting a legal
25 interest in the above-listed property may, within sixty days of the first
26 posting of notice, or receipt of notice, whichever is earlier, petition

1 the Court for a hearing without a jury to adjudicate the validity of his
2 alleged interest in the above-listed property, and for an amendment of
3 the Preliminary Order of forfeiture, pursuant to Rule 32.2(c) and 21
4 U.S.C. § 853(n) as incorporated by 16 U.S.C. § 668(b) and 28 U.S.C. §
5 2461. Any petition filed by a third party asserting an interest in the
6 above-listed property shall be signed by the petitioner under penalty of
7 perjury and shall set forth the nature and extent of the petitioner's
8 right, title, or interest in said property, the time and circumstances
9 of the petitioner's acquisition of the right, title or interest in said
10 property, and any additional facts supporting the petitioner's claim and
11 the relief sought. Discovery may be conducted in accordance with the
12 Federal Rules of Civil Procedure upon a showing that such discovery is
13 necessary or desirable to resolve factual issues. The United States
14 shall have clear title to the above-listed property following the Court's
15 disposition of all third-party interests, or, if none, following the
16 expiration of the period provided in Rule G(5), as incorporated by 16
17 U.S.C. § 668(b) and 28 U.S.C. § 2461, for the filing of third-party
18 petitions.

19 Pursuant to Rule 32.2(b)(4), this Preliminary Order of Forfeiture
20 is final as to Defendants at the time of sentencing, or at any time
21 before sentencing if Defendants consent, and is made part of the sentence
22 and included in the judgment. The Court retains jurisdiction to enforce
23 this Order, and to amend it as necessary, pursuant to Rule 32.2(e).

24 ///

25 //

26 //

s/Edward F. Shea
EDWARD F. SHEA
United States District Judge

ORDER ~ 7